

Message Text

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62

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SCCT-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9267

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS XF

SUBJECT: GOL CONCERN RE POSSIBLE BREACH BETWEEN EGYPT AND FEDAYEEN

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

REF: BEIRUT 8680

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SUMMARY: GOL LEADERS ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER

POSSIBILITY THAT PRES. SADAT MAY HAVE MISJUDGED PALESTINIAN REACTION TO HIS RECENT JOINT COMMUNIQUE WITH KING HUSSEIN, AND THAT FEDAYEEN WRATH COULD GET OUT OF HAND AND SPELL TROUBLE FOR LEBANON, OTHER ARAB STATES AND ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT. END SUMMARY

1. IN BRIEF TALK WITH ME MORNING JULY 26, LEBANESE FONMIN NAFFA MADE KNOWN GOL'S CONCERN THAT CURRENT EGYPTIAN-FEDAYEEN DISPUTE OVER JULY 17 SADAT-HUSSEIN COMMUNIQUE COULD DEVELOP INTO OPEN BREACH BETWEEN PLO "MODERATES" AND GOE. WHILE NAFFA UNDERSTANDS SADAT'S DESIRE FORGE GENERAL ARAB AGREEMENT ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE PRIOR TO NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA, HE BELIEVES EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT--IN HIS ANXIETY TO PAPER OVER JORDANIAN-PLO DIFFERENCES--MADE MISJUDGMENT BY ACTING TOO SUDDENLY AND WITHOUT ADEQUATELY INFORMING 'ARAFAT OF WHAT WAS COMING. RESULT, ACCORDING TO NAFFA, WAS THAT FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" WERE TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR JULY 17 BOMBSHELL AND THAT 'ARAFAT'S LONGSTANDING POLICIES RE KEEPING STEP WITH EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED--NOT ONLY IN EYES OF FEDAYEEN DIE-HARDS BUT ALSO IN THOSE OF COMMANDO RANK-AND-FILE.

2. NAFFA CONFIRMED THAT PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP IS CURRENTLY DOING ITS UTMOST TO GALVANIZE ARAB PRESSURE ON SADAT TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN EGYPTIAN POSITION (OR AT LEAST GAIN FEDAYEEN MORE SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES THAN THOSE MADE SO FAR BY FONMIN FAHMI). HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT KEY TO SUCCESS OF THIS EFFORT LIES WITH SYRIA AND THAT SO FAR SARG SHOWS NO RPT NO SIGN OF BREAKING STEP WITH SADAT ON THIS OR ANY OTHER MAJOR ME SETTLEMENT ISSUE. (COMMENT: WE NOE PLO PROPAGANDA APPARATUS HERE IS TRYING HARD TO PORTRAY OPPOSITE PICTURE, WITH Wafa REPORTING JULY 25 THAT PRES. ASSAD HAD REASSURED 'ARAFAT OF SYRIA'S TOTAL SUPPORT FOR PLO AS SOLE REP OF PALESTINIANS. CONTINUED SILENCE OF OFFICIAL SARG MEDIA ON THIS SUBJECT, HOWEVER, TENDS BELIE FEDAYEEN CLAIMS.)

3. I UNDERSTAND THAT GOL OFFICIALS, IN THEIR CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH PLO/FATAH REPRESENTATIVES HERE, ARE DOING CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR BEST TO CALM FEDAYEEN AND URGE MAINTENANCE OF CONSTRUCTIVE PLO-GOE DIALOGUE. NAFFA TOLD ME GOL IS CONCERNED OVER VIOLENT PALESTINIAN REACTION WHICH COULD RESULT FROM OPEN BREACH BETWEEN FEDAYEEN AND GOE ON THIS ISSUE AND SPELL TROUBLE NOT ONLY FOR LEBANON BUT ALSO FOR SMALL STATES AND/OR VULNERABLE ARAB GOVTS IN ARABIAN PENINSULA, INCLUDING KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA.

4. COMMENT: SEEMS POSSIBLE TO US THAT SADAT'S "BOMB-SHELL" MAY HAVE BEEN DELIBERATE PLOY AIMED AT SHOCKING FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" IN PARTICULAR AND PALESTINIANS IN GENERAL INTO REALIZATION THAT TIME HAS COME FOR THEM TO RESOLVE CERTAIN CRUCIAL AND DIVISIVE ISSUES THAT THEY HAVE AVOIDED COMING TO GRIPS WITH FOR SO LONG. ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT HE MAY HAVE MISJUDGED DEPTH AND TEMPERATURE OF BASIC PALESTINIAN ANTIPATHY TOWARD HASHEMITES, AS WELL AS WILLINGNESS OF PLO "MODERATES" TO STICK THEIR NECKS OUT ("FOR FREE", AS IT WERE) ON SUCH EMOTIVE QUESTION. IN ANY EVENT, (AND WE NATURALLY DEFER TO EMBASSY CAIRO'S JUDGMENT ON THIS), SADAT MAY NEXT CHOOSE TO TRY AND SOOTHE PALESTINIAN EMOTIONS BY MAKING SOME "FAVORABLE" GESTURES IN 'ARAFAT'S DIRECTION. THERE IS ALWAYS POSSIBILITY, OF COURSE, THAT BY THAT TIME FEDAYEEN DIE-HARDS AND OTHERS WILL ALREADY HAVE PRE-EMPTED HIM BY EMBARKING ON NEW WAVE OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN ME AND ELSEWHERE.
GODLEY

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